

Robt. Dargan  
1832.

W. H. D.

# DOCTOR BARTON'S REPORT.

NAVY DEPARTMENT

Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, December 1, 1842.

SIR: In obedience to your instructions of the 28th October, the undersigned has the honor to submit the following preamble and estimates for the medical department of the navy.

The preamble is deemed absolutely essential for a true understanding of the real condition of that part of the Navy Department which comes under the direction of the bureau of Medicine and Surgery. The developments it contains are neither agreeable, nor, perhaps, expected; yet it is right that Congress should be in possession of the facts showing the awkward condition of the medical department, in relation to its fiscal concerns. It is also just to yourself to show how much *reform* was needed in this branch of the service. It is but fair to the incumbent of this bureau, that the heavy demands existing on an appropriation which, for a series of years, seems to have been either insufficiently asked, or inadequately granted, in reference to the expenses that appropriation was designed to liquidate—should be explained. That the annual appropriations for the outlays of the medical department have not been, in some years, anterior to that just passed, in parity with the current expenses of those years, the undersigned sees no occasion to take upon himself to assert. But that, in the series of years alluded to, the aggregate appropriations have not only not been commensurate with the aggregate outlay, he not only takes upon himself to say, but, also, that the deficit in the former, to bring them on an equality with the latter, amounts to a sum which, unless provided by a specific appropriation, will press heavily, for years to come, on the usual medical appropriation, even by a process which would subtract a tithe of each year's grant, for the gradual extinction of the present demands. It would, therefore, be equally disingenuous to assume these demands, in part, in the basis of estimates for future wants—thus vainly and uselessly, and, on the part of the undersigned, culpably endeavoring to conceal the embarrassment they occasion, and unwise to withhold any longer from Congress, the fact that, until they are wholly dissipated by specific funds, no economy can be apparent, as consecutive to the reorganization which introduced a bureau in this Department, among the effects of the operations of which, economy was anticipated as an important one.

To start in this bureau, under the just expectation by Congress and by yourself, of thrift and saving, with the clog of an aggregate debt of *fifty thousand dollars*, would be idle. This is the sum, *at least*, which, by a gradual increment from a previously unwise method of making estimates, meets the undersigned in the fiscal part of his bureau. To dissipate the trammels of this residual sum after years of injudicious estimates, by gradually lessening it out of the annual appropriations, instead of acquainting Congress at once with the naked truth, would require that thirteen thousand dollars should, *annually, for four years*, be abstracted from the medical fund! The result is plain, supposing this course should be adopted instead of the one the undersigned proposes, of *eclaircissement*, that, for four years to come, the bureau of Medicine and Surgery would *seem to increase* the heretofore usual appropriation, by thirteen thousand dollars annually!! That neither system nor economy could be imputed as a part of such wild operations, is clear; that unmerited blame and obloquy would be heaped upon this part of the reorganization, is equally plain;

that an unjust unpopularity would meet its measures, at every step, is not less manifest; and, finally, that its abolition would be the probable issue, is unquestionable. With these general observations, the undersigned proceeds to the details within his knowledge, on which they have been based, after the following explanatory observations.

The difficulty that meets the attempt at making the required estimates at the onset, has already been premised. Its cause, or causes, rather, (for there are several,) will now be set forth.

These estimates are for the moiety of the year approaching, ending on the 30th June next, together with superadded estimates for the whole of the fiscal year thereafter, ending on the 30th June, 1844. To arrive at these would be a simple affair. But the simplicity of it becomes, instead, a complex calculation, by the existence of claims unpeased, to the amount already mentioned, in round numbers.

When estimates were presented to Congress prior to August, 1842, for an appropriation of \$30,000, to defray the current expenses of the medical department of the navy during the year 1842, there remained, on the day of the passage of the law granting the appropriation asked for, certain arrearages due for outlays in the medical department, to an amount, in the aggregate, actually exceeding, very considerably, the total of that appropriation.

The whole of it was, therefore, swallowed up in less than a week after the passage of the act, although five months of the year thus seemingly provided for, were *in futuro*. But this is not all. *At least* \$10,000 still remained due and unpaid. This sum (\$40,000) had grown out of bills, *all* charged certainly, if not *all* justly chargeable (which admits of doubt\*) to the appropriation for the medical department. The result is as manifest and intelligible, as its sequence was natural. An appropriation for the whole of the year 1842 was extinguished in a few days, to liquidate (although only adequate to do it partially) the debts of the year 1841, those of 1842 accumulating the while. The debts of 1840, with a similar retrogression, had been paid, also only in part, out of the appropriation of and for 1841; those in like manner of 1839 out of the appropriation of 1840, and so on, by retrogressive shackle, for perhaps a long course of years; each anterior year's debts bringing the additional increment of the portion left unpaid from the periods of time gone by, as an *undecaying* dead horse, the price of which was to be paid, sooner or later, out of funds set apart to buy food for the living one. All this time Congress remained ignorant of the true state of things, believing that each annual appropriation was competent to its object, since it always reached the amount asked as competent for the year embraced.

Thus the undersigned has brought you, by the simple statement of a state of things which quickly reached his mind, to a thorough understanding of the confusion which would continue, unless the affair be rectified, on the just and competent principles of cure. It only remains to say, that whatever information this preamble may communicate, of a novel or unexpected nature, it was all forced on him with convincing celerity by the power of *figures*, on the moment when his duty led him to investigate the fiscal concerns of his bureau, and to ponder the singular

\* Many of them are known to be *flagrant intrusions* to a large amount. Some of them considerable *annual draughts* on the appropriation for "medicines, &c.," so entirely foreign to any use, purpose, or appliance whatever, for the sick of the navy, that it is surprising by what process of reasoning they have been brought under that appropriation, paid, and passed.

uniformity of navy agents' returns in the loaded column appropriated to "amounts overpaid." The amazement, this uniformity and the large amounts of that column produced, can be better understood by you than explained by the undersigned. Sufficient ground for this will be admitted when he simply states that he had expected to see a clean and clear leger, exhibiting the distribution of the appropriation in parcels to those agents as debits for the year current, with simple offsets against these of credits for lawful outlays of that year from the medical appropriation. Far from this simplicity of grant and expenditure was the result of his scrutiny; having found, not only the groaning columns of over-payments on account of the appropriation for "medicines, &c.," but unwarrantable intrusions on the fund, especially for the support of the naval asylum, the irregularities in the administration of which you have promptly proceeded to correct, on the moment of the disclosures which the reorganization produced.

The cause of all this is traceable, as has been stated, several years back, by the annual interlocking with each successive appropriation for any particular year the claims of some year anterior—thus leaving an apparent competent fund, in a state of glaring incompetency to meet the objects it was lawfully designed to meet.

This cause of insufficiency to liquidate the annual demands, was dilated by an immoderate expenditure from year to year, far beyond the actual need of outlay for surgeons' necessaries and appliances—an immoderate expenditure, growing out of a lax and irresponsible method of making requisitions, and obtaining their approval, by officers incompetent to judge of the necessity for them, either in kind, or in the quantities asked for; and still further enlarged, by an unrestrained and *craft-inviting* course, in having those requisitions executed.

But these were not the only causes which impinged the strength of the appropriation. An additional one is found in the *loss* which the practised system of entire unaccountability engendered, of articles of imperishable nature, but costly price, and which had been obtained out of congressional appropriations apposite to such expenditure.

The necessity for *replenishing* these admitted of no abatement, from the fact that, having once been obtained, they *ought to have been preserved* for future and other similar use to that to which they were first applied. The fact was evident that now they were gone. This overwhelmed every other view. No accountability existing, either by law, usage, or much individual exertion on the part of those concerned, but, on the contrary, any and every essay towards instituting it having been uniformly extinguished, by a constant refusal by the usual recipients to give receipts or vouchers for delivery of articles after return cruises, it is neither surprising that losses of costly appliances ensued, nor is it strange that a continual drain was thus instituted, on a specific fund, destined, in part at least, to meet outlays of one year, which would last for the same purpose in the service, if well taken care of, for several consecutive years.

It is easy to perceive how these causes might quickly impoverish an appropriation, even if it had been well devised to meet current expenses; but when it is remembered, that a doubtful judgment had been shown for years past, by those who furnished the Secretary of the Navy with the data for his estimates on the branch of the service in question, and that a policy not easily understood, or involving an unacquaintance, perhaps, with the veritable state of perpetuated claims, led to asking, or causing to be tasked of Congress, an appropriation wholly insufficient—it becomes pal-

pable that the irregularity and irresponsibility in making requisitions, and the exorbitant charges on their execution, in, at least, one of our Southern seaports, joined to the carelessness, waste, and loss, produced in the manner noticed, are causes, in combination, adequate to produce their full share in contriving the embarrassments now complained of and exhibited.

In truth, the appropriation for one year was often, if not always, virtually, though perhaps not apparently, foreclosed, for any benefit to that year's outlay, by the engulfing arrearages of the year or more previous. The real state of affairs in the medical department not being known, or, being known, not having been developed, it became next to impossible to meet *indefinite* outlays or claims by *definite* appropriations. A similar difficulty would now exist, if any estimates were predicated on the unsound policy of perpetuating the mystification which has characterized the medical outlay for years past. Under the full conviction of this, that specious and deceptive lure, held out by narrowed estimates, is now abandoned and anathematized. The plain truth, devoid of cloud or obscurity, is now before you, and the undersigned believes that you will better receive it than a mesh of intricacies, predicated on calculations which must fall short of adequacy, if devoid of that foundation. There is nothing problematical in this policy.

To disclose to you that which *figures* in the accounting books, and in the official returns of navy agents to his bureau, revealed to the undersigned, is a duty. To make that disclosure, fully and fairly, is common honesty.

It may not be without utility to observe here, that whatever may be the amount granted hereafter, to the medical department, its integrity will most likely not be invaded by any of the irregular causes of diminution which have been noticed. Hitherto, there not having been any restraining influence over outlays, and no practicable method of recalling the material proceeds of those outlays into the store rooms for public property, nor any power exerted till lately, (for the evil was not known to the power until brought to light by the reorganization,\*) to stay a truly ruthless

\* Six hundred and sixty-five dollars and fifty-seven cents were (unauthorized) paid out of the appropriation for "medicines, surgical instruments, &c.," for 31 blue cloth frock coats, with navy buttons, and a silver star ornament; 31 pairs blue cassimere pantaloons, and 31 blue cassimere vests, with navy buttons—and all this toggery for "Jack"—for pensioners, who never had worn any thing longer than a sailor's jacket, or, at most, in storms, a monkey or pea jacket, the cost of which is \$8, instead of \$14, charged for the frock coats, made in *officers'* undress fashion! This will serve to show the unwarrantable intrusions on the appropriation for medicines referred to in the text. But it may more strongly be set forth by this fact: of \$7,121 64, paid by the navy agent at Philadelphia from the 1st of October, 1841, to the 25th of October, 1842, out of the appropriation for "medicines, &c.," \$1,040 19 only were for medicines, surgical instruments, and surgical purposes. The remaining \$6,181 45 were for items of expenditure *wholly foreign to the intent of the appropriation*, and, of course were what have been appropriately called intrusions on the fund, not known to be practised, nor thought of by Congress, when they made the appropriations in question. How could thirty thousand dollars, appropriated for the naval service for the whole of the year 1842, be deemed sufficient, when a *mal-administration* of the fund, on one station, swept off at once, in a few days more than twelve months, \$6,181 45, not lawfully chargeable to the medical fund? Could the balance, \$23,818 55, be for a moment thought competent to supply all the ships, sick quarters, hospitals, &c., in the United States, for a whole year? That this *mal-administration* may be understood, the navy agent's return to the bureau of Medicine and Surgery is annexed *in toto*, as an appendix. It will not be understood, however, that the slightest blame is imputed in these irregular transactions, to that gentleman, officially, or in any other way. The irregularity is chargeable, and is now unhesitatingly charged, on the governor of the naval asylum who approved the bills, and thus ordered their payment out of an appropriation which no sophistry could make chargeable with such burdens. In addition to these irregular outlays, the sum of \$3,500

host of intrusions on the medical appropriation, the inroads on which, conveyed the thought, to cool lookers-on, that its fastness must have been considered impregnable, and its resources exhaustless; nor, seemingly, any fear of that power—for, among other impoverishing drains, the appropriation has been made the passive, patient, enduring instrument of a whimsical prodigality—which it would be affectation to call by any other name—of a tissue of taxes, absurdly conceived, and unauthorizedly levied by a *se-ipse* expenditure, (for a naval charity,) the grotesque character of which is equally anomalous and queer; nor, as it would seem, any chastened appreciation of the *intent* of the appropriation, else this dwindling away of the easily told contents of small coffers, at best, would, under the review of any rational intelligence, have quickly conveyed the self-evident truth, that those coffers could no more be expected to defray such profuseness, than the recipient of a parish bounty could be thought able to pay the rent of the almonry which gives him food, raiment, and shelter; nor, finally, above all, any *gleam* of accountability emanating from the confused mist surrounding the disjointed and schemeless way of furnishing the general supplies of the medical service;—nothing of all these propositions (which, in the aggregate, make up a true *sorites* deducible from *facts*) existing in the service, the conviction that kind of argument produces is logically irresistible—that heretofore it would have been the greatest hardihood to have promised, or expected, a faithful distribution of any appropriation on which draughts were irremediably inordinate, irregular, prodigal, if not senseless, and often wholly useless for any purpose save enriching the rapacious furnishers. That this epithet is merited by some, is, unfortunately for the weak and groaning medical appropriation, but too true. To their extortionate and unconscionable charges, especially for surgical instruments,\* the undersigned has called your attention. They in part, but doubtless not to the extent of a tithe of the occult freebooting which for years has been in operation, under the guise of fair profit, have been brought to light by a report to Congress, now in its printed documents. That report resulted from an investigating commission instituted by your immediate predecessor, with that peering scrutiny into irregularities and abuses for which he was remarkable; and which has, in the same sharpness, been instituted by yourself, and carried out, (from a conviction that reform could no longer be postponed, consistently with the public interests,) into a digested system of reorganization which is hourly presenting additional facts to confirm the necessity for establishing, continuing, and ex-

---

is reported on the purser's pay rolls, as paid, annually, for *wages or pay* alone (*exclusive of officers' pay*) in that institution; \$428 of which is the wages of a person rated and paid as hospital steward who never performed five minutes' duty as such in the hospital, but was solely employed as purser's clerk, and to buy provisions for which he was regularly paid, as any agent not connected with the institution might have done. Of this whole amount of \$3,500, for wages, (the subsistence of those so paid being a further charge, and paid out of the appropriation for medicines,) only \$936 were allowed in the estimates of the Secretary of the Navy, and subsequently \$303 per annum were allowed or a carpenter's mate—making \$1,239 allowed—the balance (\$2,361) being entirely unauthorized or near the whole amount—the residue, to speak cautiously, at least very doubtfully authorized.

\* It may illustrate this remark to state, that the records of this bureau show that an eminent surgical instrument maker, of Philadelphia, sold certain instruments of his manufacture, of first-rate workmanship, and approved pattern, for the sum of \$669 81, to certain druggists largely supplying the medical outfits of vessels in a neighboring seaport. The commission alluded to in the text, conducted by Benjamin Homans, Esq., now of the Navy Department, shows that these identical instruments were furnished by the druggists alluded to, to certain vessels, and that they charged Government for them the sum of \$1,224 54—thus exhibiting a profit of \$554 73; in

panding that reorganization. These hourly revelations are, at least in the  
t**bureau of Medicine and Surgery, absolutely amazing.**

The difficulty of making, with any prospect of redemption, such a  
n*promise as has been above touched on, or realizing any such expectation*  
c*as alluded to, would hitherto have been further enhanced by the practice,*  
heretofore pursued, of making good an exhausted appropriation by bor-  
t*rowing, temporarily, from another. But pay day was to come at last.*

The undersigned has shown you that its approach is as vicinal as the  
r*demands with which it is fraught are importunate and insusceptible of*  
k*postponement. Procrastination will not mend, but mar that measure, which,*  
i*only, can bring the issue right. The enlightened views of Congress, once*  
e*invited to this measure of fiscal appeasement, would, by the undersigned,*  
p*be confided in to meet the emergency. You, doubtless, are inspired with*  
c*the same confident reliance on their just sense of necessity for something*  
a*to be done effectual, thus ultimately closing the door, so long and injuri-*  
ous*ously to the public credit wide open, for the ingress of irregularities varied,*  
m*mischievous, and odd. In a word, a specific appropriation to obliterate re-*  
i*tropective claims, would block out that door, by raising an impenetrable*  
s*barrier against future abuses and irregularities. That measure once ac-*  
complished, nothing of the anomalous operations which have been devel-  
oped and complained of, can be interposed (if the incumbent of this bureau  
does his duty) to prevent a due regard in keeping, without intrusion, all  
future appropriations.

The existing scores once erased by payment, the course will be clear for  
economy and thrift.

The goal at the end of that course can be reached in no other way. An  
unsettled leger would perpetuate embarrassment, by withholding the  
ready money which ought to find its way into cash payments for supplies,  
and diverting it into the channel clogged with the obstacles of debt and dis-  
credit—it might be said no credit at all, for the smirch it has sustained, if

other words, an exorbitant charge of about 83 per cent.! This, too, on articles of well known  
established price. These prices were approved in the usual way, and *actually paid*. The same  
commission brought to light, from actual vouchers, the charge by the same druggists of \$287 82,  
in four years, for the *recipients* of medicines and freights, although they state, on oath, that the  
“drayage, freight, &c., was always paid by them.” Epsom salt was invariably charged, in  
wholesale quantities, at ten cents per pound, when it can any where be purchased of wholesale  
dealers at five cents, and even much less. Half an ounce of veratria\* was charged at eighteen  
dollars! An ounce of gold is worth sixteen dollars, (a doubloon or *ounce*;) thus was a small  
white powder charged at thirty-six dollars an ounce—four dollars more than twice the value of an  
ounce of gold. One ounce of strichnine,† a similar powder, was charged at thirty-four dollars—  
that is, two dollars more than twice the value of an ounce of gold! Two dozen bottles of Bedford  
spring water were charged eight dollars, viz: 33 cents per bottle. Two scabs of vaccine virus were  
charged at nine dollars! Oiled silk, worth, of the *best quality*, \$1 37 $\frac{1}{2}$  per yard, was charged eighty  
dollars for twenty yards—that is, four dollars per yard! Seventy-two bottles compound syrup of  
sarsaparilla were charged at \$108, viz: \$1 50 a bottle. The *retail* price is every where 75 cents  
a bottle; and it has been purchased by this bureau in Philadelphia at \$7 50 per dozen, or \$45 per  
72 bottles.

In the examination of vouchers by the same commission, still more extortionate charges ap-  
peared on some articles. In short, the whole of the charges, now printed in the documents of  
Congress, are of the same extortionate character. The illustrations given are ample to prove the  
truth of the remarks in the text, on the rapacity of furnishers. Of \$42,504 34, paid by a navy  
agent, at the seaport alluded to, out of the appropriation for “medicines, &c.,” these furnishers  
received \$22,676 10.

\* Philadelphia prices to this bureau: veratria \$10 50 by one firm of chemists, and \$10 by another, per ounce; the  
wholesale of these poisons being ounces and one and half ounces.

† Philadelphia price to this bureau by one firm of chemists, \$7 per ounce; by another, \$6 50 per ounce, avoidpous;  
the wholesale, also, of this poison being ounces and one and half ounces. Some difference existing between the  
manner of putting these articles up, by the two firms, their prices may be said to be about equal for the drug.

not indelible, is so deep as to have actually frustrated the economy which would have been the result of cash payments by the bureau.

There has been no reciprocity in the borrowing complained of, but what added to the evil.

In short, the medical appropriation having been made to bear the burden of a collapsing pressure, meager, ill conditioned, ill provided, as it has been, it was ever seized on in such plumpness as recent Congressional action may have given it, grappled with, thrown down, filched, and picked to the bone, by voracity in the furnishers, and by the relentless tugs of the visionary and the inconsiderate. The evil exhibited is considerable and pervading, but not inextirpable. Fortunately, the remedy is at hand.

Should Congress deem it right and expedient to meet the emergency by the annihilating power it possesses, that course would dissipate the mystified condition of the concerns which now come under the bureau of Medicine and Surgery. Until that step be taken, all attempts at reducing the medical appropriation to the square-and-compass test will prove fallacious, deceptive, and unavailing. When taken, the appropriation may, thereafter, be in good understanding made, and in good faith expended.

It is now, therefore, submitted to your consideration, whether it might not be well to lay these facts before the appropriating power, and ask for the requisite funds to release the accounts, in abeyance, from all prospective trammel or postponement. This would render the operations of the bureau fully perspicuous and effectually economical. It would, too, relieve its chief from floundering in future amidst debts and drawbacks, which otherwise would create a *vis inertia* inimical to the object of its institution, and fatal perhaps to its existence. This may be a fit place to suggest what the undersigned cannot but deem a modification in the future medical appropriation, imperatively called for by the principles of unity in purchases, requisitions, issues, and accountability, adopted in this bureau. The modification alluded to has reference to that distinct appropriation, heretofore recognised for the medical disbursements for the marine corps. This separation of objects, homogeneous in their nature and uses, presents an unnecessary distracting influence over the medical department of the navy; and, moreover, the distinct appropriation exhibits, often, an ungainly disproportion to that for the service of the navy proper. In the present year, for example, that disproportionate unsuitableness between means and the objects they are to embrace, was very striking—\$4,140 to \$30,000. When the relative numerical strength of the navy proper, and the marine corps, is glanced at, this injudicious variance in proportion will be readily perceived. There are other reasons for amalgamating the two appropriations, involving the good of the service, in the generalization now aimed at in the bureau.

After maturely considering all the aspects of this hitherto distinct appropriation, the undersigned is unable to perceive any good reason for continuing, as a separate item of appropriation, the funds for the sick and hurt of the marine corps. Indeed, he can find, in the whole view of the subject, not only no reason, good or plausible, why it should be distinct from the general naval appropriation, but every good and sufficient reason that might be fairly asked for, why it should not be perpetuated in separation.

They may be summed up in these: the naval surgeons in all instances, without exception, perform the duty of medical officers to the marine corps, from headquarters down to the smallest guard allotted to vessels of war.

In many instances, notwithstanding the separation of appropriations that have a common object and tendency, the necessaries and appliances for the sick and hurt marines, are drained from the supplies obtained out of the appropriation for the naval service proper. The same kind of drain carries away a large portion of the supplies on board of all vessels having a marine guard. There remains, perhaps, only the medical department of the marines at headquarters, in Washington, to be supplied out of the specific and distinct appropriation for marines. There does not seem any appropriate cause, or plausible, much less valid reason, why this should continue, especially now that all requisitions and approvals, both for the articles and the payments for them, originate, or are entertained and adjusted, in the bureau of Medicine and Surgery. If all requisitions, then, and the administrative surveillance of them, preparatory to payment, exist in one office, there seems to be much propriety in suggesting that the funds should be a unit for the two objects.

Should this state of separate appropriation be not hereafter set aside, the result will inevitably be an irruption on the unity of action, expenditure, issues, and accountability, general and fiscal, which ought to be maintained inviolate in the concerns of this bureau. The primitive cause of the usage is not known, nor can its necessity be defended on any stable ground. For these reasons, it is now submitted to you, whether the present would not be a fit opportunity so to modify the next solicited appropriation for the sick and hurt, as to embrace, *under one general head*, the navy proper and the marine corps.

In addition to this improvement in the essential base of the appropriation for the sick and hurt of the navy, the undersigned takes occasion to suggest another, less essential or important, but still an improvement, which, if adopted, would not be without its advantage. It relates simply to the phraseology of the appropriation, as it has heretofore been expressed.

The nomenclature of appropriations is entirely conventional; and it is presumed something of appositeness in the funds required to the objects they are destined to procure, is intended to exist. Under this idea it is suggested, that hereafter the funds given by Congress for the medical department be styled "An appropriation for surgeons' necessaries, and appliances for the sick and hurt, of the naval service, including the marine corps."

The phraseology of the appropriation, as heretofore used, is not in sufficient generalization. The details expressed, even, form but a small part of the whole of those multifarious necessaries and appliances for the use of the sick and hurt, and hence it seems strange to designate them by a virtual misnomer, and to suffer them, a mere part of a multitudinous whole, to give a nomenclature for the appropriation. The generalization of the subject seems more proper; and the title of the appropriation now proposed seems to embrace that generalization.

It will be perceived that the sum of one thousand five hundred dollars has been appended to the estimates, for the purchase of surgical instruments. This requires some explanation. The instruments of the medical department of our service are, confessedly, in a state of imperfection. Nay, notwithstanding the large sums heretofore annually paid for them, many are good for nothing, or, at least, indifferently passable. This is owing to the incorrect manner of procuring them, without any responsible judge of their workmanship and pattern. But a more important fact

must not be withheld. Much money has annually been spent for instruments, both good and indifferent, for twenty or thirty years past; and, yet; where are they? Who can tell? Many are gone, very many. *That* the undersigned *can* tell. Whither, who can say? None having been responsible, in the slightest degree, for them—none seriously and officially charged with their custody, it would, indeed, be difficult to say whither gone. But it avails not to speculate. Gone they are, and they must, if the navy exists, be replaced. The reorganization you have effected, will render it impossible, for cause, to put these unanswerable interrogatories in future. The defective and indifferent instruments still remaining ought to be sold. The proceeds of such sale, reverting to the medical appropriation from which they were purchased, will, when effected, lessen virtually the grant solicited for the purchase of these indispensable portions of surgeons' necessaries and appliances. Under this candid revealment of the facts connected with these expensive outfits, it is not doubted that Congress will see occasion to make the grant.

One other grant is suggested, as really needful, in the opinion of the undersigned, but as it is of novel character, he prefers asking you to leave the sum unnamed, requesting of Congress that whatever importance may be attached there, to the request, it may meet with a corresponding degree of liberality in the sum appropriated. The object referred to in the suggestion for a grant of money to meet it, is intimately connected with the efficiency of medical officers. It is, that a small, compact medical and surgical library shall be authorized to be purchased for each vessel of war, in proportion to her size and capacity for the accommodation of books in the surgeon's department, and also for the hospitals and sick quarters of navy yards. A due responsibility for these, well devised and rigidly enforced, would secure them always for each successive cruise, subject only to the losses and destruction incident to the disasters of the sea. Extensive and costly libraries are furnished by Government to the commanders of all ships in the navy, often embracing a large proportion of mere general literature. Professional works, so important to medical officers, should not be denied.

All which is most respectfully submitted, by your obedient servant,

WILLIAM P. C. BARTON

Hon. A. P. UPHUR, *Secretary of the Navy.*

